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# DIALOGUE ON DEFINITION AND EVOLUTION OF THE FIELD OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Steven Kelman, Fred Thompson, L. R. Jones, Kuno Schedler

## ABSTRACT

*How may public management be defined as an academic field? From what disciplinary bases has public management evolved? What knowledge frameworks does public management need to comprehend? What types of research is needed to improve scholarship in the field? This article presents the views of four internationally recognized public management scholars in response to these questions. The dialogue took place on the International Public Management list server in October 2003 and is reproduced here with only minor editorial changes.*

## INTRODUCTION

How may we define public management as an academic field? From what disciplinary bases has public management evolved? What knowledge frameworks does public management need to comprehend? What types of research is needed to improve scholarship in the field? This article presents the views of four internationally recognized public management scholars in response to these and related questions. The dialogue was initiated by Professor Steven Kelman, Kennedy School, Harvard University in response to an invitation to deliver a presentation on the meaning of the “M” [management] at the annual research conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) in Washington, DC in November 2003. After consultation with IPMN coordinators, Kelman placed his APPAM essay on the IPMN list server so that members could have access to his views. Fred Thompson, Professor in the Atkinson Graduate School of Management, Willamette University responded to Kelman’s essay with his statement on the meaning of management, agreeing with Kelman to an extent but augmenting Kelman’s comments and articulating some issues often omitted or misunderstood with respect to the definition of management generally, and public management specifically. Kelman then made a brief response to Thompson’s statement. Larry Jones, Professor in the Graduate School of Business and Public Policy, Naval Postgraduate School then wrote a short essay responding to both Kelman and Thompson, extending the scope of the dialogue to issues not addressed by either. Kuno Schedler, Professor of Public Management in the Centers for Excellence, University of St. Gallen then responded to Kelman, Thompson and Jones with a short essay noting, in part, other issues to be considered from a continental European perspective. This dialogue took place on the International Public Management list server in October 2003 and is reproduced here with only minor editorial changes.

## **THE M IN APPAM: HOLDING ON TO A PRESCRIPTIVE PAST AS WE GROPE TOWARDS A (MULTI-) DISCIPLINARY FUTURE**

Steven Kelman  
Professor of Public Management  
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At the time of its birth, public management at public policy schools very consciously defined itself as something “new and different.” It was new and different in three respects:

1. In comparison with political science, it was oriented towards prescription (making suggestions for how to improve the performance of government organizations) - as opposed to mere explanation and analysis.
2. In comparison with policy analysis, it was concerned with “implementation” (what actually had to happen inside the government for a good idea to turn into reality) - as opposed simply to making abstract prescriptions about good policy.
3. In comparison with public administration, it was oriented towards strategic actions by top organizational leaders, in particular in interacting with the political system - as opposed to an emphasis on lower levels within organizations and functional management specialties such as budgeting or personnel management.

The separation of public management from political science, policy analysis, and public administration has been salutary in many ways.

1. When I was a grad student in political science, we were encouraged to keep a strong psychological distance from the object of our study. Government was “they,” and we were trained to put “it” under a microscope like some exotic insect. There was not even the hint of a suggestion that any part of our role was to improve the performance of government in delivering public value. And since I studied political science in grad school, the situation has gotten worse. The dominant so-called “rational choice” mode of analysis encourages contempt for people in government. Discussions within mainstream political science of government organizations either appear bizarre to anyone with actual experience in government (such as the “bringing the state back in” debate about whether non-elected government officials play an independent role in influencing government policies) or center on a tiny subset of possible themes of interest in discussing government organizations (such as the disproportionate interest in the ability of Congress to control agency behavior).
2. In the public policy schools, the view that prescription is not complete when the policy analysis is done has, at this point, become widely accepted. What in the early 1970’s the Kennedy School referred to as the “missing chapter” is now no longer missing and is generally longer than a chapter.
3. The focus on top leadership rather than mid-level functional areas has both provided a more realistic view of the jobs of career civil servants at senior and even middle levels - in particular, bringing politics into the picture - and also

has contributed to a welcome focus on overall agency performance and the creation of public value, rather than narrow and technical functional performance. This focus in academic public management has helped, I think, contribute to the increased importance of “managing for results” in public management practice.

In addition to these positive effects, I believe we have made great progress since the public policy schools started in teaching public management effectively. I think that in our introductory public management courses at public policy schools, we impart knowledge, approaches, and habits of mind that are likely to make our students more effective in the public sector than they would have been absent this training. As is often the case, the highest value-added insights come disproportionately towards the beginning of these courses, where we provide students lenses through which to view the world. Students are likely to leave these introductory courses with an appreciation of the importance of focusing on a few important goals and relating one’s everyday actions on the job to those goals, and of thinking in a disciplined way about what needs to occur to translate an idea into reality; I also believe we impart valuable practical ideas about negotiating effectively, participating in political deliberation, and using performance measurement to improve organizational performance. I believe very strongly that I personally was able to be considerably more effective while working in government by applying ideas I had taught in public management classes.

The case method we often use in these introductory courses also has important pedagogical value. First, it doesn’t spoon-feed insights to the students, but rather encourages them actively to engage the material. Second, stories - and cases are stories - are often a more memorable and effective way to impart a generalization than are abstract generalized statements. Third, as we have, at least in many public policy programs, moved away from our earlier preoccupation with failure to highlight cases involving heroes and successes, cases can provide our students with role models and a sense of hopefulness about careers in public service, as well as counteracting the kinds of negative images dominating the media.

While I believe that those of us engaged in public management at public policy schools have a good deal of which to be proud, I also believe our stance over the past thirty years has contributed to a very important shortcoming: there is not nearly enough good prescriptive (or even explanatory) research being produced about how to achieve high performance in government organizations. Our stance has contributed to this problem because the very declarations of independence from the traditions of political science, policy analysis, and public administration that allowed the field to emerge and make a contribution have also hurt our ability to produce good research.

Our justified declarations of independence from political science and policy analysis became to a significant extent a declaration of independence from accepted standards of and the intellectual contributions made by scholarly research in the social sciences. At its most arrogant, we have sometimes assumed that no existing social science research is relevant to what we do. A number of years ago, a former colleague noted he was surprised that Kennedy School public management faculty did not routinely, when beginning to investigate a topic, first examine existing research related to the topic under investigation; I am amazed how often I read public management articles or books that make casual reference, with no literature citations and seemingly without

knowledge of the existence of research in these areas, to topics that have been the subject of significant scholarly theoretical and/or empirical work. I think we very much suffer from a collective “not invented here” syndrome.

A disappointingly small fraction of public management research is conducted in accordance with accepted scholarly standards. Too small a fraction of research involves datasets large enough to permit quantitative analysis. But even qualitative research is often not conducted according to scholarly standards for such work. In particular, the focus on top executives and away from production processes and organizational behavior, which was important to the declaration of independence from public administration, has brought to the fore an emphasis on studying phenomena to which it is most difficult to apply accepted social science methods, and where the empirical foundations for theorizing are hence very weak. There is too much of “guru” style writing of the kind many faculty at the Harvard Business School get away with for practitioner audiences, but that is widely scorned by business school academics at other institutions.

In isolating ourselves from larger scholarly communities, we have exacerbated - or, at least, done not enough to combat - already-existing trends away from production of research on the management problems of the public sector by scholars outside our community. Fifty years ago, a good part of the work on organizational theory grew out of public-sector empirical material or issues. One thinks of Selznick, Blau, Simon, Kaufman - even Max Weber. Today, sadly, work relevant to the management of the public sector has as good as disappeared from mainstream political science; except for the public administration section of the American Political Science Association, one could literally count on one hand the number of political scientists today doing work addressing problems significantly related to public management. My thesis advisor, Jim Wilson, produced few successors inside political science (many of his students don't teach in political science departments).

A very large amount of management research exists, centered around journals such as *The Academy of Management Journal* and *Administrative Sciences Quarterly*, often done by social psychologists or sociologists typically working at business schools. Virtually none of this research involves public sector organizations. As a result, organizational issues especially relevant to public organizations - such as employee motivation in the relative absence of differential monetary rewards, non-financial performance measurement/management, contracting, cross-organizational collaboration, and relationships between career and political employees -- receive grossly insufficient attention from the mainstream of academic management research. We shouldn't be blamed for these unfortunate trends, which relate both to funding and teaching position availability, and to the declining status of the public versus the private sector. But by isolating ourselves from these communities, we have not been in a position to question them with colleagues outside our community.

There are signs of a disciplinary “turn” in public policy schools, including in public management. Our challenge in our own community will be to associate ourselves intellectually with relevant academic disciplines - including social psychology and sociology, and with academic management research at business schools - while retaining a prescriptive focus that is, rightly, at the heart of the public management tradition. As we embrace that challenge, we will also be in a better position to make the

case to the community of scholars studying organizations, and to political scientists who have abandoned such a study, that the behavior of public-sector organizations, which account for a significant portion of our GNP, deserves far more scholarly attention than it has been receiving. If we produce better research, we will also produce better prescription -- and thus remain very loyal to our roots.

## **THE M NOT ALWAYS IN APPAM: MANAGERIALISM**

Fred Thompson Grace and Elmer Goudy

Professor of Public Management and Policy Atkinson Graduate School of Management,  
Willamette University

Steve Kelman's description of public management may be a fair description of public management at policy schools and APPAM, although I am inclined to think it is a better description of public management at the Kennedy School. There was another group of public management scholars in the US, some at generic schools of management and many in schools of public administration. They shared APPAM's normative perspective, but tended to look upon the public management approach Steve describes as a bit frou-frou. Although some of these scholars were active in APPAM, the closest thing they had to a real home was the public-not-for-profit section of the Academy of Management -- certainly many of those scholars published in the AMR -- Jim Perry, Barry Bozeman, Hal Rainey, Brint Milward, Martha Feldman, even Larry Jones and me.

According to Overman and Garson (1983), the distinguishing characteristics of this branch of public management included:

1. A focus on management functions rather than social values and conflicts between bureaucracy and democracy;
2. A focus on economy and efficiency in lieu of equity, responsiveness, or political salience;
3. A focus on mid-level managers in lieu of political or policy elites;
4. A tendency to consider management generic, or at least minimize the differences between public and private sectors in lieu of accentuating them;
5. focus on the organization in lieu of a focus on laws, institutions, and political-bureaucratic processes;
6. A strong philosophical link with management disciplines in lieu of close ties to political science, sociology, psychology, or economics.

I still think this is a pretty good way to think about public management as an academic field. Indeed, defining its subject-matter boundaries along explicitly managerialist lines motivated my commitment to internationalizing it. Political analysis is inherently parochial; managerialism is ecumenical -- the field's primary common denominator where its discourse is transnational.

Like Steve Kelman, most managerialists were also inclined to believe that a good normative model is merely a good empirical model run backwards. Managerialists tended to rely on linear models in which  $y = f(x)$ . That is, given condition set  $x$ , outcome  $y$  will occur all other things equal; absent set  $x$ ,  $y$  will not occur. Hence, if you want  $y$ , do set  $x$ . In an extremely insightful discussion of learning from practice, Larry Lynn reworked Simon's "Proverbs of Administration" to draw a distinction between proverbs or principles and rules. Principles are universal truths; they always apply, but are largely devoid of specific content. Thus, "pay attention to people." "Do first things first." "Do what has to be done." In contrast, rules are contingent propositions: if you encounter a problem of the form  $A$ , do  $A^*$ . But don't do  $A^*$  if the problem is  $B$ , because it won't work. In other words, rules are based on robust distinctions. Theory helps us to deduce distinctions; we do empirical work to test their validity with real data; and then we teach the resulting rules to our students, making certain that, if they are curious, they can find out how the rules were produced. His conclusion is that what we need are analytic tools, enabling students to tell  $A$  from  $B$  and to know what to do,  $A^*$  or  $B^*$ , or what questions to ask, in each situation. Of course, but this presumes we can sort the rules out first. Hence, Larry Lynn, very eloquently stated what most managerialists once implicitly believed, although they were inclined to believe that management study is likely to be more rewarding where guided by management literature than by basic social science theory, as he seemed to assume. Hence, depending on the question, this branch of the field looked to coherent bodies of practical argumentation on production management, management control, human resources management, strategic planning, the design of programmatic organizations, or executive leadership for conceptual frameworks relevant to management processes and practices rather than to disciplines such as game or agency theory, institutional design, public policy, or policy politics, to name the source disciplines Larry mentions in his overview of the field.

Where I would NOW take issue with Larry Lynn and implicitly with you and most of my managerialist friends goes to the practicality or feasibility of this agenda. In most areas of public management research, I am inclined to believe this agenda is premature. We should seek out proverbs of administration rather than try to deduce rules from first principles. Good clinical analysis is the better way to find principles (as in Kelman's book on public procurement). Once one has good principles to work with, good theorizing can (and probably will) follow.

Here, let me draw an analogy with corporate finance. We started with a principle generally acknowledged to be true: "the best way to get rich is to buy low and sell high." V.A. Dodge transformed this principle into a set of the rules for portfolio balancing in the 1930s. Clinical research in the 50s showed that mutual funds that followed Dodge's rules, on average outperformed other investment strategies. Modern portfolio theory derives from a rigorous analysis of those rules. I have heard that option pricing has a similar etiology. Financial managers started with an principle: run your gains, cut your losses. A couple of them (I have heard names mentioned, but I don't remember them) developed some rules for puts and calls that best-practice research in the 1960s showed worked. Black, Scholes and Merton formalized those rules and integrated them with the body of financial theory. The point is that even where we have first-rate management theory, we started with proverbs or principles, the managers who transformed those principles into rules based on robust distinctions, and evidence of the efficacy of those rules in other words, clinical research. Of course, clinical research

doesn't have to mean sloppy research. (For an example of superior clinical research, see Womack, Jones, and Roos, "The Machine that Changed the World"). However, clinical analysis is more like practical decision-making - identify the key attributes of the problem (assessment of signs and symptoms), match the problem to others with known solutions (diagnosis), apply known solution to existing problem (prescription), check to see if the situation improves (monitoring) - than positive research. It is hermeneutic in nature. People figure out what to do by interpreting situations, deciding which facts are important, searching memory for similar fact patterns with known solutions, matching those known solutions to their interpretation of the situation, and applying the solution to the problem at hand. If that doesn't work, they start over. Clinical practice increases one's ability to perform these steps and on reflection to appreciate them.

Clinical research can illustrate consequentialist relationships; it can suggest hypotheses about relationships; it cannot test relationships. For that, I would concur with you that comparative statics are required, ideally in the form of a controlled experiment, quasi-experiment, or econometric analysis. From this perspective, clinical methods are neither conclusive nor robust, although carefully matched case comparisons may approximate the results of other approaches to comparative statics (Barzelay 2001). The fundamental conceit of clinical research is that the really important concepts of management cannot be grasped if treated in merely formal relationship to one another. As Karl Weick explains in *Making Sense of the Organization*: "Typically, environmental change is viewed as something largely outside the influence of organizations. The position we are developing suggests a different conclusion. Justifications, assembled into paradigms, can be enacted into a changing environment, thereby imposing some stability on it. Perception guided by a coherent paradigm can prefigure an environment. And confident action based on that prefiguring can actually move the environment in the direction of those paradigmatic preconceptions. That possibility is the important design point that is implicit in serial self-fulfilling prophecies." (80)

My experience suggests that there is a fundamental truth embedded in this conceit. When management principles become the objects of commitment and action, consequentialist relationships – responsibility and authority, knowledge and organization, incentives and cooperation – look different from the way they do in the doctoral seminar room. To understand relationships of this kind, perhaps, one must experience them – either directly or indirectly through a narrator's ability to make sense of a particular time and context and convey that sympathetic understanding to the reader.

The observation that organizational processes are not in fact straightforward consequentialist relationships implies the rebuttable proposition that clinical research is a better way to study them than are methods based on comparative statics. Take the design of organizational interventions, much of the literature on this topic has focused on identifying change rules, but this "technique" oriented literature has one serious limitation: it is not really clear what social mechanisms and processes are supposed to be activated through the initiating and follow through action by authority figures (Bryson, 1995 is an example). That is precisely the kind of question that narration lends itself to.

Consequently, I accept the core of Lynn's argument without embracing his homilies about suitable methodological directions for public management research. Lynn is



absolutely correct when he implies that any serious attempt to move from principles to practical reasoning requires a conceptual frame, Clinical research is especially in need of sound conceptual frames. So, I like your Kelman's flexible approach to public management research – which reserves an important place for narrative analysis. But the developmental arc of my thinking about public management research goes in precisely the opposite direction of Kelman's. I was trained in positive science and methodological individualism, empirical testing of carefully specified models derived from first principles –that's the kind of research I used to do (occasionally still do). My experience leads me to conclude that at this time it's not a practical way to go about answering most of the kinds of questions about public management we'd like to be able to answer.

As an aside, I have often thought that Larry Lynn's deference to normal science reflected his innocence of it; perhaps, my newly found appreciation of narrative methods is equally ingenuous. There is big difference between reading about or even teaching something and doing it.

I confess my methodological inferences are largely conjectural. Ultimately, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The only unqualified advice I would presume to offer the prospective public management scholar is: "Do good work! Interest, delight, persuade, and amaze us. But remember every kind of discourse has its rules. Abide by them. In addition, it would be nice if public management scholars were to cultivate a richer appreciation for alternative discourses and a shared sense of our subject matter, the boundaries of which are probably a greater source of conflict within the field than are rules of discourse.

#### KELMAN'S RESPONSE TO FRED THOMPSON

Fred:

As always interesting, and I think correct. I would describe the clinical approach as follows: Explicit, self-conscious management problem solving with a firm grounding in empirical cases-- the stories and lore of what works and what doesn't. Tackling specific management problems and searching for pragmatic solutions. Focusing on the behavior of managers and the tools they have to influence the behavior of the organizations they are trying to lead. One of the reasons I am looking at contracting these days is that I think we need to train our public sector network managers how to influence the work of people that do not work for them directly and from what I can see we don't really know how to do that very well (the lore is not well developed).

Steve Kelman

# **THE M IN MANAGEMENT: HOW DO WE DEFINE PUBLIC MANAGEMENT?**

L. R. Jones

Wagner Professor of Public Management

Graduate School of Business and Public Policy, Naval Postgraduate School

Steve, Fred and Colleagues:

I would like to make some comments in response to Steve Kelman's and Fred Thompson's observations on how we define public management. I appreciate Steven's views because my undergraduate major at Stanford was political science where I studied under Todd La Porte, Raymond Wolfinger and others, and because part of my graduate work at Berkeley was completed in the Graduate (now Goldman) School of Public Policy under the direction and influence of political scientists Aaron Wildavsky, Robert Biller, Martin Trow (a sociologist) and others including the noted organizational theorist and critic of bureaucracy Guy Benveniste. In addition, as Fred mentioned, much of what I have published in the areas of government regulation of business, management control, public financial management, public budgeting and public management reform is managerialist in perspective. I would like to address several issues that I believe are important to scholars working in what is, in my view, the nascent sub-discipline of public management (i.e., part of the larger discipline of management) from the perspective of having worked in this area for approximately 20 years, with the last decade devoted to research on international public management.

1. Public management has evolved as a highly interdisciplinary field. Consequently, substantial contributions to how public management is defined have been made by scholars whose primary fields of research include those of the traditional social sciences – including political science, economics, sociology, psychology, philosophy, cultural anthropology, the biological and physical sciences – biology, mathematics/statistics, physics, chemistry, and applied fields of study including law, public administration, policy analysis, program evaluation, organizational theory and behavior, business management, operations research and systems analysis, computer and management information systems, accounting, corporate and municipal finance, program, education, medicine and others.

To illustrate briefly by example, those who work in public management know that research in the areas of electoral politics, voter behavior, theories of governance, the dynamics of political systems and other sub-disciplines in political science, including public administration and, arguably, public policy (arguable as to whether it is part of or separate from political science), have been essential to our understanding of policy making, its relationship to implementation, political leadership, resource competition and allocation decision making and so on. Similarly, we know that public management research methodology and management reform thinking have been influenced by public choice and new institutional economics – as well as by sociology and organizational theory, mathematics/statistics, psychology, etc. The attention that public management scholars pay to the environments in which management systems, organizations, governments, governance systems, non-

profit organizations and other public entities operate has been influenced directly and indirectly by foundation work in economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and biology as well as that in business (especially marketing) and law. We conceive of public sector organizational change as “evolutionary” or “adaptive” to their environments almost as if they are living systems. We search for the presence of sufficient inputs (political, economic, social, cultural) to form a “critical mass” of elements necessary to support management change and reform, using the term much as physicists and chemist do in their fields of research. We investigate policy and organizational networks under many of the assumptions familiar to biologists and ecologists. We analyze the cultural characteristics of organizations and their environments in ways learned one way or another from anthropologists, sociologists, biologists, and even physicists and chemists. In empirical case analysis we formulate tests of hypotheses and apply statistical methods in ways similar to the scientific method employed in the hard sciences.

My purpose here is not to provide a comprehensive identification and categorization of all of the elements of thought and knowledge from various theoretical and applied fields of study that have contributed to how we define and understand public management. Rather, I wish merely to support the point that public management as a sub-discipline has been and is highly interdisciplinary -- and that the degree of interdisciplinary has increased over the past decade and will continue to expand in my view as I read our literature, listen to presentations that cross-disciplinary lines (often quite radically) in various nations around the globe and review the highly varied backgrounds of the approximately 1000 members who have voluntarily joined IPMN.

2. My second point relates to the first in several ways. It is that public management is essentially different from what is often referred to as “traditional public administration” in that the former focuses more on what happens within governments and on the operation of the individual functions of government while public management pays more attention to the operation of governments from the perspective of their interaction with the environments in which they operate. Public management tends to conceive of governments and governance systems similar to the ways that organizational theorists look at strategic behavior in response to contingency in the environment, as adaptive systems influenced by critical variables in their surroundings, or as economists think of competition between organizations in markets, or as business/marketing analysts think of strategic positioning of products and product lines relative to the attributes of consumer preferences and market demand. This is not the only difference but it is important one.

To illustrate this point we may compare the influence of Luther Gulick and the Gulick and Urwick POSDCORB model (1937) that the task of administration consists of planning, organizing, staffing, developing (the organization culture), controlling, operating, reporting, and budgeting on public administration to that of organizational theorist James D. Thompson’s (1967) conception of the study of complex organizations as adaptive systems. Further, PM places more emphasis on the role of the manager as an active and motivating agent (more on this follows) whereas PA tends to view administrators as those who more passively execute the will of their political

masters. To illustrate this point we may contrast the Gulick and Urwick model with the view of the renowned management scholar Peter Drucker when he explains the role of the manager (1953: 343-344): "A manager sets objectives...organizes, motivates and communicates...and develops people." Drucker's words also resonate with my point that follows on "letting managers manage."

3. Even when public management scholars look inside organizations we tend to be influenced more by the perspectives of a number of sociologists including Peter Blau, Chris Argyris, Charles Perrow and others, political scientists including Aaron Wildavsky (e.g., on political dynamics in budgeting), and economists or public choice theorists than the functionalists whose perspective may be viewed to rest on the Gulick model and on the more mechanistic principles of Frederick Taylor and Taylorism. Additionally, when public management scholars look inside organizations we tend to think about the incentives and disincentives that produce certain types of behavior, relationships and decisions rather than the rules and forms that prescribe how personnel, civil service, budget and other functions are guided and operated. how inventories are managed, etc. Public management focuses more on the operation of management systems and the use of management techniques, technology and control systems, i.e., the performance of entire systems evaluated by performance criteria, whereas public administration tends to concentrate on how the individual parts of the government operate and evaluate these based on workload and similar measures.

In this regard, public management tends to focus on the outcomes of systems more than the factor inputs to production. Public management shares much with the benefit/cost and risk/benefit perspectives and methodologies familiar to scholars who work in the field of public policy analysis, and in this way scholars in both public management and policy approach analysis and problems solving in ways that are different than the methods of traditional public administration that tend to look a hierarchy and bureaucratic rules and procedures.

Public management shares with public administration the methods of interview and survey, participant observation and case analysis. However, in public management we tend to push these methods beyond the ways that public administrationists or political scientists often use them. For example, public administration researchers often try to gauge the power of a government agency by the strength of its ties to powerful elected officials and also to voter preferences. Public management researchers want to use surveys of citizen satisfaction with services in much the same way that private sector marketer researchers do, based on a desire to shape service provision policy to the patterns of citizen needs and preferences, and to determine appropriate service delivery methods, differential pricing alternatives and, even different institutional arrangements for the provision of services including provision by the private and not-for-profit sectors. In terms of how case analysis is performed and used in public management versus public administration, see Barzelay (2001) and Barzelay et. al. (2004) for example.

4. Public management is highly concerned with the operation of agents, agencies, agent relationships and government entities as they operate within

networks and with stakeholders inside and outside of government. PM research accepts the premise that individual agents, agencies and governments cannot solve problems by unilateral action. Rather, if problems are to be resolved at all, the pathways to progress will lie in cooperation or some other forms of relationship between a number of entities (i.e., stakeholders) in the problem environment. On the other hand, PA has spent much more effort attempting to improve the operation of individual agencies or organizations, although this appears to be changing within PM so that the gap in this regard between PM and PA seems to be narrowing. This may be viewed to be occurring in a number of areas, which suggests that traditional PA already has been modified considerably by the influence of PM. However compelling this observation, it is a different issue to be explored elsewhere.

5. PM researchers tends to think of “resolving” problems and moving on to new ones that will have to be dealt with continuously as the relationships between methods and the nature of problem evolve as dynamic systems within unpredictable and contingent environments, while traditional PA tends to think more along the lines of solving problems a static process within a more predictable and often bureaucratic environment.
6. PM has taken on methodological concepts and tools from the private sector much more readily than PA. In fact, PA tends to resist this transference of technology in many instances. e.g., reengineering, reinvention, new technologies, citizen/consumer market analysis, differential pricing to influence patterns of demand, etc.
7. PM tends to focus on incentives and disincentives, as noted, on the input side to government and governance, and on the results or outputs and outcomes of what networks of government agencies and other entities produce. The application of what is termed the production function model (input > production/workload measures > output and output measures > outcomes and outcomes measures in a feedback loop) is far more prevalent in PM and often is sneered at as to much a product of business thinking by many PA scholars.
8. PM tends to want to assess performance of individual entities and to devise measures to evaluate performance over time. The purpose of evaluation is, in the end, to find ways to deliver services more effectively and efficiently to citizens. The improvement of an administrative system that might be judged as successful from the PA perspective using measures of workload seems to PM advocates to focus on the wrong measures of success. Improvement of a payroll system may for example satisfy internal budget and administrative criteria for success but unless services are supplied better to citizens as a result, PM critics will not be satisfied. Accomplishment of the tasks of performance measurement, performance management, reengineering, realignment, etc. are not ends in themselves for PM scholars. The goals of system change from the perspective of PM are more oriented towards reduced cycle time, increased quality and reducing costs for citizens than to the satisfaction of more narrow internal efficiency criteria applied by traditional PA and bureaucratic organizations.
9. PM tends to push for the delegation of management authority and responsibility to managers (as individuals) and for holding managers

accountable for the performance of the entities they manage. The oft-stated dictum of PM is to “let managers manage” but this must also acknowledge that managers are to be held more closely accountable for the successes and failures of the units they manage. PA tends to want to place responsibility and accountability more on entities such as government agencies or departments. PM tends to view this as placing the authority and responsibility where accountability cannot be obtained effectively. Rather, where this is practiced, the “bureaucratic” pattern of behavior -- of bureaucrats and elected officials -- is, to the PM way of thinking, to take credit for successes but to avoid association with failures -- or even risk and ambiguity. On the other hand, public managers are expected to cope with risk and uncertainty and be held accountable for how they manage in the face of such conditions.

10. PM tends to place emphasis on value and management changes that increase or reduce value to citizens, government entities, agencies, managers and employees. As Moore has explained (1995), the concept of value creation is essential in assessing management processes, rules and regulations, performance and reform. PM tends to look at value production from the perspective of value chain analysis and similar approaches. The concept of cutting rules, procedures and process that do not add value to the production of the outputs/outcomes that satisfy the mission of the organization or government is central to the PM paradigm (Jones and Thompson, 1999).
11. As Fred Thompson noted in his comments, PM tends to de-emphasize the differences between management in the public and private sector. “Good management is good management regardless of sector” is this view in essence. However, this does not presume that the objectives of government and business are identical. Still, at a certain level objectives do not appear to differ much, i.e., organizations and managers in both sectors are interested and motivated to “increase value” in their organizations and outputs. Additionally, PM tends to assume that the work condition attributes and incentives that produce employee satisfaction in one sector are roughly the same or perhaps identical to those of the other sector. People are not motivated solely by money. In essence, survey research demonstrates that employees want to feel as though what they do matters in terms of contributing to the satisfaction of the mission of the organization, and they want to know how what they do specifically contributes value in this effort. People want to get up in the morning and look forward to going to work rather than dreading the experience. These factors do not seem to differ between the public and private sectors. Consequently, public management seeks the flexibility to manage people with the same degree of flexibility as employers in the private sector (this flexibility has been reduced to a considerable extent in business over the past several decades). Civil service rules and procedures and labor unions tend to resist changes to personnel systems that move further towards performance management and away from seniority and protection of the rights of workers. PM advocates do not deny the need to protect civil servants from the abuses of political systems run amok, patronage, fraud, waste and abuse of privilege. However, PM tends to view the cost of the operation of the controls and control systems (command and control types of controls) in personnel management, budgeting and other areas of government as more costly than the

potential costs of abuse under properly designed and implemented management control systems.

12. The conception of the learning organization that constantly restructures, reengineers, reinvents, realigns and rethinks its methods and policies is central to the vision of much PM thinking (see for example Jones and Thompson, 1999). In this view, organizations that learn to move through the observation, orientation, decision and action loop more quickly learn faster from their actions relative to key attributed in their environments so as to be more likely to survive and thrive than organizations that do not act and learn as quickly.
13. PM research and dialogue has become increasingly international. PA tends to trail in this regard but is making genuine progress it appears. Researchers in PM want to know how their findings on cases in one institutional, governance and socio-economic and cultural setting relate to findings and dynamics in other systems, nations, levels of government, etc. In fact, the international component of PM research on reform has evolved into virtually a separate sub-discipline, i.e., international public management. We can gauge this trend to an extent by the emergence of a number of international and comparative academic journals plus books and articles with this focus that have hit the market in the past decade or so.
14. Given all the above, it is understandable why many public administrationists and those in other more conventional fields of social science find objection to the managerialist-oriented perspectives, characteristics and methods of public management. This disaffection finds many outlets. For example, the current movement to study and improve “governance” may be viewed in part as motivated by objections to the managerialist paradigm.
15. Two topics that continue to receive significant attention at present are networking and a set of issues related to what is termed “governance.” Research on networking has been on-going since at least the 1970s. Many issues related to networks and networking remain unresolved so that continued dialogue in this area is constructive. Renewed attention to governance (versus government) appears to have emerged in the public management dialogue and literature in the past five years or so (See Schedler, forthcoming).

What do those who focus on the need for renewed emphasis on governance issues mean when they exhort the field to think about this topic? While no claim is made to capture all of what is understood and that motivates the leaders of this movement, it seems that a renewed interest in governance concentrates on five issue clusters, each with its own set of imperatives: (a) improved understanding of linkages between politics and administration, (b) the need for improved analysis of stakeholder positioning and preferences in formulating public policy and management execution strategy, (c) analysis to better define network relationships among stakeholders internal and external to government, (d) the necessity for addressing potential and real abridgements of public participation rights and basic principles of democracy, and (d) finding remedies to address the absence of government responsiveness to citizens in policy formation and execution. Furthermore, the governance movement may be viewed as a response to a perceived absence of sufficient attention given to these five issue areas in the drive to devise and implement managerialism in government over the past several decades.

While defenders of managerialism may argue that the intent of managerial reform is to improve efficiency and effectiveness within government, thereby making government more responsive to citizen service preferences, few would argue that these objectives have been achieved as a result of world-wide adoption of many of the management policies, procedures and methods advocated by managerialist proponents. Proponents of public management often argue that not enough time has elapsed to thoroughly evaluate experiments including what has been labeled new public management (NPM) implementation. From our view, this is more the truth in some settings than in others. Experience with NPM in New Zealand, for example, is mature enough so that many of the consequences of implementation are relatively well understood. However, in Switzerland it is clear that more time is needed to assess the impact of NPM-oriented reform. In the U.S., there probably is enough evidence to pursue such evaluation but, as of yet, satisfactory empirical analysis has not been presented. Still, beyond the issue of evaluation, few defenders of NPM would argue that those who assert the need for improved governance are wrong or misguided in directing attention to problems in this area.

One thing that we have learned quite clearly from evaluation of managerialism is that little reform takes place beyond reengineering in public organizations (which in most cases has been positive in and of itself) unless political policy makers become interested and take on as part of their mandate a consistent push to put the concepts and practices of managerialism into place, and then to monitor and steer its implementation. Thus, the need for improved governance is evident to both supporters and critics of past and present public management reform.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize again the importance of an applied perspective in how I define and conceive of public management -- as learning from application and then, perhaps, building hypotheses that, if tested well, might lead us to the formulation of useful theory, i.e., that which is valid, replicable and answers the questions we pose. I remember remarking at an IPMN workshop in Potsdam, Germany in June 1997 in response to a comment by Larry Lynn on the value of the contribution of economic thinking to the development of the field of public management that what we were interested in finding out in public management through empirical analysis of individual cases and then through comparison and contrasting the findings from different cases was, in essence, "What works, what doesn't and in what contexts these successes and failures have occurred." Since this time I have heard this phrase repeated time and again. And, in fact, Lynn published an article in *Public Administration Review* that mentioned the International Public Management Network in the context of asking these questions (endorsement appreciated). To my same observation made a year or so later Howard Frant added, "...and why?" As noted by Steven Kelman and Fred Thompson, these questions remain the focus of much inquiry in public management and international public management as applied sub-disciplinary components of the discipline of management.

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## **THE 'M' IN APPAM -- A REACTION TO THE RUNNING DEBATE IN**

### **RESPONSE TO KELMAN, THOMPSON AND JONES: A MORE EUROPEAN VIEW**

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In reference to Steve Kelman's speech at APPAM, published on this list server about three weeks ago, and to Fred Thompson's as well as Larry Jones' reaction to it, I would like to add some more thoughts maybe with just limited sender legitimization, as the debate by now has focused strongly on developments in the USA. Here is the perspective of a Continental European academic with his own background and history.

1. Steve Kelman defined how public management in its early years was "new and different" in three respects. He delineates it from political science; policy analysis; and public administration. This distinction is quite familiar even to non-US academics, although most often caused by the study of US literature. It seems that over here in Europe, public management either does not have any long-lasting tradition at all (like in France, where they even do not have a terminus for it), or has been developing out of a different disciplinary context. Most often, in my view, the roots have been some kind of public

administration science, with a strong if not dominating influence of the public law tradition. Less often, it has developed as a sub-discipline of general management theory (as argued by Larry Jones), similar to a professional / functional specialization, such as the management of insurance companies; tourism; small and medium businesses; and banking. This supports Fred Thompson's view that managerialism is ecumenical it is only the context that makes the difference.

2. To many of us, public management is still a discipline without its generic theory (or method). It shares its fate with general management in that it has to draw its scientific approaches from sociology, psychology, economics, and other disciplines. Only in the last few years, some public management scholars have attempted to create an original approach for public management research. Among them are Larry Lynn; Michael Barzelay; Steve Kelman and few others. This is not to say that its only them to do "real" research, but our discipline lacks of generic and original theory building including an ambition that aims at more than just the case under observation. Although I believe that good cases are the starting point of sound theory building, I also believe that the hypotheses generated in case studies need to be tested in one way or another. But what could such theories with higher ambitions be? I am certainly not in the position to propose. I can only report about some of the ideas over here: the rationalities model (trying to explain how politicians and administrators communicate their tasks although their thinking is based on completely different rationale); the customer-citizen actor theory (aiming at different role perceptions by one and the same person); more about the functional use of power at the boundary between politics and administration (by the way a fairly old subject for French sociologists such as Crozier); and the factors of political systems as relevant context for public sector reforms (most prominent: Pollitt and Bouckaert). What we need is a set of original theories that are identified as public management.
3. Speaking of identity, it seems to me that public management lacks of something else: a 'culture'. Following the Schein model, we need artifacts: how do we look like How do we smell What is the sound of public management We also need common values and beliefs: What is the ideal role of government What should the good public manager do Which are the values of an ideal public manager And we should take a deeper look into our basic assumptions. Are we on the theory x or theory y track On the other hand, public management as a discipline trying to develop a common culture could also mean to exclude lateral thinking. We could develop into a closed social system, with all the drawbacks of self-referencing. One thing to discuss further.
4. Public management is in a way unprivileged as it has a competitive empirical problem: the practical basis, which we are studying, is much less dynamic and much more risk-adverse than the private sector. This, at least, has changed since Simon's, Selznick's and Blau's research. Innovation is less traditional, and if it takes place, it is often hidden and non-spectacular. To students of organizations, government seems not to be the place to find a new breath-taking trend in order to get into the A-journals. In Europe, public management developments seem to suffer from a time lag of about 10 years compared to

private sector management. What's more, public management reforms have a life-span of between four and eight years, contingent on the stability of a government. Most reforms are not stopped because they failed. Most of them have died down due to a loss of political attraction, or they were stopped by the succeeding government without regard to their success (such as the NPR, if I get this right). With politics dominating so much, public management comes second. But still, implementation matters. It is "where the rubber meets the road," as I learned in the USA. If we transfer Michael Porter's argument in the competitive advantage of nations to our discipline, we could say that we are structurally disadvantaged but this should drive us to try harder than the rest.

5. In traditional public administration theory in Continental Europe, there has normally been a pecking order among disciplines, including politics at the first place ("primacy of politics"); public law at the second ("rule of law"); and administration (including management) at the third. As a matter of course, there is an interrelation between the disciplines in that, e.g., top managers within the administration have an important role to play as policy advice actors, or in that the law has not only been formulated by politicians, but also limits them. Nevertheless, management has traditionally come last, which made it less attractive to scholars than in the USA. With the emergence of the new public management, this pecking order was obliterated for more than ten years. Public management succeeded in setting its concerns on the political agenda. Interestingly, the difference between public management and public administration such as described by Kelman and Jones (p. management being executives, p. administration the mid-level functionaries) was never made in Europe. One reason could be the fact that management in general did not have the significance it had in the USA. Another one could be that the term "management" has a wider cognition than just executives - it is valid for all directive functions, including mid-level managers. Thus, the 'M' in APPAM has set the ball rolling irreversible in this part of the world.
6. Theory, as well as empirical testing, needs a measure of success. If we want to find out what makes a public organization more successful than another, we need to define "success." This is fairly easy for private sector organizations (survival; earning; competitive advantage). It is not so easy for the public sector. Kelman speaks of "high performance in government". But how to define "high performance" Efficiency and effectiveness are one side of the coin, legality and legitimacy the other. The latest debate about "governance" is reflecting the shift from purely managerial conceptions for reforms to a more political, comprehensive view of the evolution of public service delivery. It is the renaissance of politics in public management. And: it will not replace public management, but rather enrich its concepts.
7. The points I made by now are not comprehensive at all. They intend to add some more views on the Kelman-Thompson-Jones debate. I agree with Kelman that public management is in need of theory building, and sound empirical testing. There has been too much "guru" style writing, indeed (and I am accusing myself, too) - too much art, and not enough science. There is not enough careful research including contextual factors in public management, either. But also, we are just about right in building

international networks in order to spread the news in public management within seconds, and to give others the chance to learn as quickly as never before. I believe that foreign students of public management in the USA are more critical today than ever before in the assessment of its transferability to their own politico-administrative systems. The time of the missionaries is up, even if masqueraded as development agencies or international organizations.

8. How should we proceed Within the International Public Management Network, we will have to use our own resources better in order to increase the level of research in public management. We will have to test our publications against two measures: a) how is my result new to the public management community, and b) which is my contribution to different disciplines, be they closer (such as general management) or further away (such as communication or linguistics). This will lead us away from purely descriptive country studies, even if comparative in the sense of "country y is doing this, country z is doing that". It would be interesting to know more about the nature of management in the context of politics, including mid-level management, as this has turned out to be one of the bottlenecks for public management reforms.

I hope these few thoughts can contribute to the discussion on our IPMN listserver.

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